

Washington, September 1, 1961

Wildlife to Benefit From New Features of Conservation Program:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin next year a program to encourage the nation's farmers to develop conservation practices which are of primary benefit to wildlife.

Under new language included in the 1962 Appropriations Act at the request of the Department, cost sharing assistance programs under the Agricultural Conservation program will be enlarged to include practices which enhance wildlife protection while also providing soil and water conservation benefits.

Under this authority financial and technical assistance will be given to farmers for the development or restoration of shallow water areas for wildlife, for constructing ponds and dams for wildlife and for establishing cover and food plots, and other practices that will enhance wildlife in a particular county or State.

Prior to the 1962 program the cost sharing assistance to farmers was made only for the agricultural benefits of the conservation practices. A large percentage of these practices contributed to wildlife benefits ranging from incidental to substantial -- primarily in building water storage facilities or in forestry plantings and vegetative cover.

Beginning with the 1962 ACP program, county and State ASC committees will be sharing with farmers the cost of practices which conserve soil and water but which conserve wildlife primarily.

This broadened concept of conservation is a significant and important effort by the USDA and farmers -- many of whom carry out small wildlife conservation programs now -- to further contribute to the protection of natural resources. It benefits farmers and all citizens.

There are other areas of concern where the Department is acting to protect wildlife resources in the public interest.

The Commodity Credit Corporation, under legislation enacted last month, is now authorized to provide government owned grain for emergency use in feeding wildlife threatened with starvation.

The Secretary of Interior, acting either on his own initiative or on the request of an appropriate State agency, may ask the CCC for grain held by the

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government, to prevent damage or loss of resident game birds, migratory birds or other wildlife.

The Department also is supporting legislation now under consideration by the Congress which will limit financial and technical assistance for drainage of certain wetlands in the three-state area of Minnesota, North and South Dakota.

The bill, HR 8520, has been reported favorably by the House Agricultural committee. It directs the Secretary of Agriculture to limit financial or technical assistance for wetland drainage on a farm where the Secretary of Interior finds that drainage will be harmful to wildlife.

Other legislation provides that the Secretary of Interior may lease or purchase the wetland area as a waterfowl resource. Where no offer to lease or purchase is made, drainage assistance may be given.

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